

Happy Birthday!

- 25 Delores Berkness
Gary Boltjes
Dianne Dalrymple
Carol Krosch
- 26 Brent Hokeness
- 27 Wilma Kruse
Paul Reyne
- 28 Cindy Langendorfer
Nathan Reyne
Mary Rydeen
- 30 Tracey Reyne

Happy Anniversary!

- 30 Chad & Kristin Jaycox

Church Family Prayer List

Each week throughout the year, we pray intentionally for families from all of our churches - please include these families in your prayer life this week.

Holly Bushard Ailts
Sharon Algood
Matthew Amundson
David Anderson
Laura Barrie & Family
Carolyn Beerman
Rod & Eunice Behrends
Jason & Paula Behrens
Merle Belz
Scott & Susan Belz
Galen & Sherry Benton
Eldon & Susan Bents
Delores Berkness

Let's remember to visit those who are in Care Centers or are homebound: especially reach out to:

Jenola Uden, Betty Taarud, Lois Carlberg
Norma Carlberg, Margaret Loger, Mary Prins,
LaDee Grant, Ron & Karen Lawrence.

One visit goes a long way!



PRAYER CORNER

Prayers for immediate health concerns:

Clyde Scheevel Janelle Johnson
Mary Prins (dealing with arthritis)
Tim Yager LaDee Grant
Marlene Wieneke Ajulo Ochala
Jean Blanshan (Virgyl Buck's niece dealing with the last stage of cancer)

Persons impacted by COVID 19:
COVID long-haulers

Prayers for those dealing with cancer:

Laurie Blume Scott Klooster
Christopher Allen Brown
John Kellen (Burdell Kuhl's friend)

Persons recovering/dealing with health issues:

Emma Schnyders Nancy Hyink
Gerald Fisher Mike Miller
Kristi Johnson John Cleave
Weston Erlandson Bill Carlberg
Steve Timmons Ariana Lopez
Ken Bipes Phil Glembin
Aiden Remme Pat Huisenga

For peace in Israel and the surrounding areas which are dealing with armed conflict...

For those dealing with grief and loss...

Giving thanks & praying for:

Our Bishop and District Superintendent...
Our teachers, administrators, students...
Front line health care workers...
Law enforcement & emergency workers...
Service women & men and their families...

If you have a loved one you would like to have added to the Prayer Corner list, or if any name needs to be removed from this list, please contact the church office:

507.372.2939
methodistoffice@gmail.com

God loves you!



Sunday, December 24th, 2023
Worship - 10:30 a.m.



livestream links

The Boxcast TV Channel

First UMC YouTube Channel

First UMC FaceBook Channel

First UMC Website

(<http://firstumcworthington.com/>)

PASTOR:

Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

Lori Nienkerk

FAMILY LIFE:

Gretchen O'Donnell

CUSTODIANS:

Sarah & Chad Nickel

GREETERS:

Steffen & Ida Van Weston

ORGANIST/ACCOMPANIST:

Jolene Kuhl

CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Jeanette Jensen

CHOIR ACCOMPANIST:

Brenda DeSmith

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Brenda DeSmith

TECH TEAM:

Kari & Claire Meyer

408 11th Street - Worthington, MN 56187 - 507.372.2939

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS - Monday through Friday - 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

♦ Office Phone >> 507.372.2939

♦ Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck >> dfinck@gmail.com

♦ Office email >> methodistoffice@gmail.com


4th Sunday of Advent



Sunday, December 24th, 2023
10:30 a.m.

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Daren Flinck
Accompanist: Jolene Kuhl

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal
TFWS - The Faith We Sing

 Please stand as you are able

CENTERING WORDS ¹

Glorify God this day. Magnify the Lord with all your heart.
Sing praises to God who reigns above. Glorify the Lord with gladness.

PRELUDE

WELCOME - ANNOUNCEMENTS

We Come to Worship God

PRAISE (verse four only) TFWS #2090 - "Light the Advent Candle"

CALL TO WORSHIP ²

This is the fourth Sunday of Advent,
a time to rejoice in the wondrous things that God is doing.

Our hearts are filled with the hope that is coming into the world.

The time is fast approaching, not for parties or presence,
but for the awareness of God's loving gift to us - the gift of the Christ child.

**Help slow us down, Lord, that we may realize that your gift of love
is at the center of our lives and our celebrations.**

We light the Fourth Candle of Advent, reminded of God's peace.
Thanks be to God who offers the gift of eternal life.

Open our hearts, O Lord, to receive your blessed gift.

 PRAISE (verses 1-4 only) UMH #234 - "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Adult Sunday School Class

All adults are welcome to join us as we look at the book *Called: Hearing and Responding to God's Voice*, by Susan Robb. We will meet in the Fireside Room at 9a.m., starting on January 7th and going through February 11th.

Fireside Book Club

Our next book is *Unorthodox*, by Deborah Feldman. This is the memoir of a woman growing up in an Hasidic Jewish community who then fought to break free of that world. We will discuss the book on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Pick up the book on your own and come ready to discuss this eye-opening story.

Confirmation Class

The Confirmation Class is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, December 26th at First UMC starting at 10:00 a.m.. The class will rotate between locations (First to Adrian) each month until Confirmation Sunday, April 28th, 2024.

Youth Event

All middle and high school youth are invited to a "Christmas semi lock-in" on Friday, January 5th. We will meet at First Lutheran Church at 4:30 p.m. and be done at 10:30 p.m.

Children and Youth Ice Skating

Please put Sunday, February 4th on your calendars for children and teens to spend an evening ice skating at the Arena! Cost of the event (including skate rental) will be covered. If you'd like to chaperone, please let Gretchen know. Kids, please invite your friends—the more the merrier!

Last call for Reverse Advent Calendars!

Please bring your filled bag(s) to the church by Sunday, December 31st. We will take care of bringing the items to the local food pantries.



Last Week's Offering	\$ 7,653.96
Carry Over Revenue (2022):	\$ 31,543.00
Revenue Year to Date:	\$ 323,089.79
Expenses Year to Date:	\$ 325,734.32

Thank you for your faithful giving!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services this afternoon:
First UMC 5:30 p.m. Adrian UMC 9:00 p.m.

C3-Christians Connecting at Church

Join us for C3! C3 is the new name for our Wednesday evening meals and activities. C3 stands for "Christians Connecting at Church" and it is our hope that you choose to connect with us there each week for a meal and, twice a month, an activity. There will be NO meal Wednesday, December 27th.

Church Undecorating

We will be undecorating the church from Christmas during C3 on Wednesday, January 10th. Come for the food at 5:15 pm and stay for the fellowship as care for our church together.

Sunday School Reminder

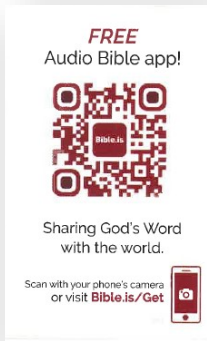
There will be no Sunday School on December 31st. See you on the 7th of January!

Faith Comes by Hearing - Through the Bible in One Year

The Family Life Team at First Church is excited to present the opportunity for you and your family to read through the Bible in one year! Starting January 1st, we will be listening and reading through the Bible by using various methods. With the Faith Comes by Hearing app, Bible Is (which is no cost) you can follow along with a scheduled reading and listening plan to hear the Bible in one year.

If you do not have a smartphone you can access this resource on the Faith Comes by Hearing website. If you do not have access to a computer, you can order a listening device which has entire Old and New Testaments recorded for your listening pleasure.

If this is something you have done in the past, it's always good to renew your understanding of Scripture. If this is something you have always wanted to do but just couldn't find the time, perhaps now is that time! Join us on January 1st for reading or listening through the Bible in one year!



🕊 OPENING PRAYER ³

Come to us, Promised One, in this season of waiting. Set our hearts ablaze with the glory of your salvation. Set our minds afire with the richness of your word. Reveal to us the secret of your ways; for you alone are wise, you alone are worthy of our thanks and praise. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

MOMENTS WITH THE YOUNG CHRISTIANS

PRAISE *"Gesù Bambino"*
Duet: Evan Lorenz (trumpet) & Pastor Daren Flinck (trombone)

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE - THE LORD'S PRAYER

We Hear God's Word

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:26-38
MESSAGE *"A Charlie Brown Christmas"*

We Respond to God's Word

RECOGNITION OF OFFERING
(please place your offering in the plates as you depart worship)

🕊 DOXOLOGY UMH #95 - *"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"*

🕊 PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We Go Forth to Serve God

🕊 PRAISE UMH #218 - *"If Came Upon the Midnight Clear"*

🕊 THE BENEDICTION - 🕊 POSTLUDE

¹ The Centering Words are based on or inspired by Luke 1 and Romans 16.
² The Call to Worship is based on or inspired by Luke 1 and Romans 16.
³ The Opening Prayer is based on or inspired by Luke 1 and Romans 16.
All are based on [or taken from] "The Abingdon Worship Annual 2023",
edited by Mary J. Seifres and B.J. Beu

Worship Attendance	Last Sunday	LIVE STREAM VIEWS	103
ADRIAN UMC	41	CRISTO EN TU AYUDA	33
FIRST UMC	83	TOTAL	263

GOD'S DIRECTION IS ALWAYS BEST!

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called ^a the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL [YOUR] HEART...

PROVERBS 3:5

© 2003 C.I.A.

Every Meal: Pastor Angel and Lourdes continue to be responsible for the food distribution at the Worthington Middle School. A donation of \$500.00 was given to Every Meal to help with the cost of providing meals for children in Minnesota.

Warm Clothing for Children at Prairie Elementary: \$745.00 was collected to help with the need of warm winter clothing for children at Worthington Prairie Elementary - those needs will be helped with throughout the winter months.

Morning Star: A donation of \$100.00 was given.

Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off

The Missions Team will be sponsoring the Annual Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off after worship on Sunday, January 28th. Everyone is invited to participate. To enter the competition, prepare a double batch of your favorite soup or chili for the congregation to sample. Watch for a sign up in the narthex or call the church office by Tuesday, January 23rd. For a freewill donation, which will be used for mission projects, tasters will be able to enjoy a soup lunch and vote for their favorite soups. For more information contact Pam Soderholm or the church office.

Minnesota West Pop-Up Food Pantry

MN West continues to offer a Pop-up Food pantry for their students who are on campus or off campus. They offer food to those that are in need of it. Your financial donations will help to purchase gift cards that will be given to the college to go and purchase items that are needed. If you would like to help with this ministry, please make your check to First United Methodist Church with Pop-up Food Pantry on the memo line. Thank you for your consideration to help this local mission.

Food Shelf Donations

Your donations for the local food shelves of non-perishable food items are accepted throughout the year, please place your items in the wagon located in the narthex. Please be aware of the "best by" or "use by" dates on the items that you are donating. Items are taken alternately to the two food shelves

Coat Closet

Love INC provides for those who need warm clothing during the winter months, taking donations of new or clean, gently used coats and snow pants for all ages. They also accept donations of new hats, scarves, mittens and boots for all ages. If you would like to donate any of these items, please bring them to the church and place them in the collection spot in the hallway. These items will be taken to First Lutheran Church Coat Closet for them to distribute to those in need. Thank you for your consideration as we reach out to help others during the cold winter months!



Missions Team Year End "Thank You!"

The Missions Team accomplished many things in 2023 because of our generous and caring congregation. We were blessed again with a generous donation from the Foundation which helped to accomplish many of our goals again this year.

Souper Bowl Soup Cook-off: We were able to have the cook-off again after not having it for two years. We had 11 participants and 60 tasters and took in over \$600 to use for our missions projects throughout the year.

March FoodShare: A donation of \$175.00 which was matched by the Worthington Regional Healthcare Foundation was given to each of the foods shelves.

Linda Doeden: Linda came to share with us about her works in Laos which was very much enjoyed by those that attended. A donation of \$500.00 was given to ELIC at the end of the year to help with Linda's work.

Nobles County Backpack Program: A donation of \$400.00 was given to help purchase items needed for the backpacks. Also, a few people from our congregation were there to help with setup and distribution.

Ag Grad Program: A \$300 donation was given to continue to help students in that program with their studies.

Visit from Delbert & Sandy Groves: We were privileged to have the Groves come for a visit and speak with us about their work in Zambia, Africa.

New International Life Missions: A donation of \$1,500 was given to help support this non-profit organization which was started by Delbert and Sandy Groves in Zambia, Africa.

The Banquet: We were able to send a group of 30 volunteers to serve an evening meal at The Banquet in Sioux Falls. \$1,575.00 in donations came in so, we were able to pay for the meal that was served plus extra funds were given to them.

MN West Pop-Up Food Pantry: \$200 in gift cards were purchased and brought to the college for them to purchase items needed for this project.

The Coat Closet Gap Ministry of Love INC: Many warm clothing items (coats, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, boots and snow pants) were donated and taken to The Coat Closet during the cold months.

Operation Christmas Child: Many donations of items were given to pack in the boxes along with monetary donations of \$800.00 that helped purchase additional items and to help with shipping costs of the boxes. A total of 200 boxes, 116 of those were packed with donated items, 60 by CETA and 24 by individuals were delivered to the collection site. Myra Palmer also gathered some ladies to put together sewing and bead kits using empty pill bottles that were donated by the congregation along with Dianne Dalrymple sewing some dresses, bags and shorts.

Food Shelves: We continued to receive donations of non-perishable items throughout the year. Those items were taken alternatively to the Manna Food Pantry and Worthington Christian Church Food Pantry.

Care Center Residents:

First UMC:
The Veteran's Home (Luverne)
Ron Lawrence

The Meadows Memory Care Unit
Karen Lawrence

South Shore Care Center
Lois Carlberg LaDee Grant

Adrian UMC:
Mary Jane Brown Ctr (Luverne)
Mary Prins

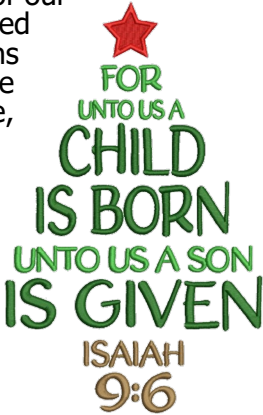
Adrian Country Living Cottage
Margaret Loger

Live Streaming...

You can catch our live stream broadcast on your smartphone, iPad, Smart TV or computer at on any one of four different app channels or online websites:

- [The Boxcast TV Channel](#)
- [First UMC Website](#)
- [First UMC YouTube Channel](#)
- [First UMC FaceBook](#)

Please note that all of our services can be viewed at the above locations even after the service is over. For example, the live stream library on our Face-book page has services from several years ago. For questions about our broadcasts, please contact the church office.



This Week

SUN	Dec 24
6:30 am	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
9:00 am	Worship @ Adrian
9:00 am	NO Sunday School @ First
9:45 am	NO Coffee Fellowship @ First
10:30 am	Worship @First
1:00 pm	Cristo En Tu Ayuda @ First
5:30 pm	Candlelight Service @First
9:00 pm	Candlelight Service @ Adrian
MON	Dec 25
Christmas Day - offices closed	
3:00 pm	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
7:00 pm	Adrian Council (Zoom)
TUES	Dec 26
9:30 am	Ladies' Coffee @ Hy-Ve
10:00 am	Confirmation (First UMC HR)
3:00 pm	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV
WED	Dec 27
7:00 am	Men's Breakfast @ Blue Line
	NO C3 Meal
	NO Bell Choir Practice
	NO G1 @ Adrian UMC
	NO Chancel Choir Practice
FRI	Dec 29
6:00 pm	Set up for Wedding
SAT	Dec 30
3:00 pm	Regotzke-Hudoba Wedding
SUN	Dec 31
6:30 am	Worship Re-Broadcast on TV3
9:00 am	Worship @ Adrian
9:00 am	NO Sunday School @ First
9:45 am	NO Coffee Fellowship @ First
10:30 am	Worship @First
1:00 pm	Cristo En Tu Ayuda @ First



Here are the highlights from
the First Covenant Council
meeting held on
Thursday, December 21.

Celebrations: Pam Soderholm share the Missions Team Year in Review (see it elsewhere in this bulletin). Randy Shirbroun reported that the Foundations has committed \$3000 to missions and \$2000 to Love INC. in 2024. The Foundation has also awarded 11 college scholarships, supported the Twins game bus fee, and paid \$30,000 in 2023 in support for the Family Life position.

Gretchen shared that the Cookie Walk was a success, even if it was held on a Wednesday night (Future events might return to Sunday). Most people were able to receive a bucket of cookies. The event raised \$530 for Hispanic youth Christmas gifts. Gretchen went on to say that the church decorating was successful, the C1 Craft Nights have been well received, Christmas Caroling had ten people participate, and the Sunday School Christmas program had 10 kids, 2 adult readers, 4-5 adult helpers provide leadership to the meaningful story told by the kids. Gretchen mentioned that Pam taught in the fall and the Advent Women's study is nearly completed.

Challenges: Gretchen shared that the friendly door monitor program is coming along. Several men have volunteered to help. She is drawing up a framework of security measures as we seek to monitor entry to church functions after they begin.

James and Ellen shared that Minnesota State guidelines for employees has been changed to include sick time eligibility for part time employees. The PSPRC have agreed that Lori and Gretchen are eligible for this requirement.

Sally Hibma reported that Mobile Meals will be gearing up on January. Our church will be delivering meals beginning February 5 through the 23rd. Sign up begins on January 7.

Pat shared that there is some lament that we were not able to purchase a church bus when it came to caroling or traveling with the youth to an event.

Current Focus: The Council reported a number of events that they are working on:

- 1) The Missions Team will once again be hosting the annual Super Bowl Soup Cookoff on Sunday, January 28th. Check details elsewhere in the bulleting.
- 2) The Through the Bible in One Year program (Faith Comes by Hearing) begins Monday, January 1st. Pastor Daren demonstrated how the program will work. Watch for more details.
- 3) Adult Sunday School will begin on Sunday, January 7 and will meet for six weeks.
- 4) The Sunday School program will be led by Missy Geerstema and Stacie Miller are working on the next session. Ida Van Weston and Gretchen will be planning the spring session.
- 5) A Youth Lock In is being planned for Friday, January 5th. Details in the bulletin.
- 6) An Ice Skating Youth event will be held on Sunday, February 4th - the costs will be shared with First Lutheran.
- 7) The next Book Club will take place on Tuesday, January 23rd at 7:00 p.m..

Cutting Edge Items: The Council discussed the following items:

Item #1: Undesignated Funds: The Foundation wondered about the allotment of undesignated funds as they relate to the Trustees and the Memorial Team. It was determined that the Foundation would work on increasing awareness by informing the congregation of the work of the Foundation and benefits of dedicating gifts to that work.

Item #2: Love INC: The Council discuss the having someone from Love INC come to speak on their best practices. Pastor Daren will contact Greg Wede to set up a Sunday when he could come and talk about Love INC's ministry.

Item #3: Children's Music Room Proposal: The Family Life proposal to convert the Children's Music Room to the Family Life Room was seconded and carried. Gretchen had a proposal that included many details on how that would happen.

Item #4: 2024 Budget: We discussed some of the dynamics of the proposed budget, which has not been finalized. We will have the budget presented in January 2024. Pastor Daren shared the most current situation on the Hispanic Church (financially speaking). They've done well in 2023, but 2024 will be a challenge they will need to meet.

Item #5: 2023 Financial Report: The Council examined the figures for our financial progress this year (see monthly budget numbers provided by the Finance Team). We are current on all expenses including apportionments, however, we have spent \$17,000 more than what we have taken in.

The next meeting of the Council is Thursday, January 18th at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Pastor Daren Flinck

Card of Thanks

From the Missions Team: Thank you for the monetary donations that were given to help with the purchase of winter clothing for children in the Worthington school district. We were able to purchase 20 coats, 12 pairs of waterproof mittens/gloves, 17 stocking caps, 2 pairs of snowpants and 1 pair of boots. Some of the items have been used for 5 students and the remaining items are available at the schools to be distributed when needed. Your generosity to help those in need is greatly appreciated!

More from the Missions Team: The Cookie Walk would not have been possible without all of those who helped out. Thank you to those who baked cookies, helped set up, helped during the Cookie Walk and helped clean up afterwards. Also, thank you to those who purchased a bucket of cookies; a profit of over \$500 was made!

From the Family Life Team: Huge thanks to everyone who made our various December events a success! From decorating to singing to baking and cooking to producing and acting and crafting. We've had a fun and memorable month! Gretchen

From Pat Grimmus: Thank you to the nine that went caroling last Sunday. Fun was had by all - except one crabby South Shore nurse. Seeing Mike and Janelle Johnson was so nice! Thank you for sharing your time to bring joy to others!!

From Jenola Uden: Thank you for the arrangement and the cup cake. That was so nice. Thanks again!

From Iris Pierce: Friends, Wishing you a warm, wonderful holiday and a bright, Happy New Year! Thanks for all you do!